CHANGING PATTERNS OF LEADERSHIP IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA: 1960-1969

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Following the desegregation decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954, most southern cities began to experience the emergence of new patterns of black leadership. These patterns actually became visible during and following the sit-in movements of the early 1960's. Prior to this time, leadership among blacks was generally characterized as "conservative" and/or "accomodating" and "compromising." However, the new patterns which evolved utilized a direct action approach to leadership, which pressed demands for social change beneficial to the entire black community.

With the preceding in mind, I shall attempt to analyze the changing patterns of leadership in the black community of Atlanta, Georgia during the 1960's.

Review of Literature.--Within the past two decades, much attention has been devoted by social scientists to the identification and analysis of leadership in black communities. In doing so, they have attempted to help us understand

the leadership roles in the black community; they have attempted to make a comparative analysis of black leadership and the larger white leadership; and they have attempted to explain why leadership takes the form it does in black communities.

The purpose of this section is to review the literature which is relative to the study of leadership patterns in black communities. While the following represent only a few of the studies done, it is felt that their contributions are significant.

Floyd Hunter's study of "Regional City" (Atlanta, Georgia)[1], was a pioneering effort in the study of community power and leadership because it initiated the reputational method of identifying community leaders and at the same time studied the black community leadership in Atlanta.

Hunter first compiled a list of leaders from names submitted by major community organizations and civil leaders. Fourteen judges were then asked to identify the top ten leaders in four areas: community affairs, government, business, and social affairs. The leaders thus identified were then interviewed in order to discover the patterns of association and influence that existed in Atlanta. This method

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[1]Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953).

was followed in both the black and white communities.

Hunter found a leadership-decision-making structure in the black community that was remarkably similar in form to that of the white community: a group of "top" decision-makers who make decisions for the black community. The black leadership structure tended to be exclusive, as was the white leadership structure. Hunter did find, however, significant differences between the occupants of leadership positions in the black community and similar positions in the white community. He found that the occupational listings of black leaders differed greatly from that of the white leaders. The former was comprised of professionals, while the latter was dominated by persons from commerce and industry.

Hunter concluded that the black leadership was basically a stable one, and that its "real" power (the ability to move goods and services) was strictly limited. The stability of black leadership was seen as a "functional necessity for the leaders of the community at large, and consequently, through the channels described a relationship does exist between the total community and the sub-community."[1]

Hunter's definition of power as "the ability to move

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[1] Ibid., p. 143.

goods and services toward defined goals" is biased toward the study of institutionalized power of a commercial and industrial type with political power seen as a secondary type. This leads Hunter to the mistaken notion that without such institutionalized centers of power, the black community leadership must be inherently "weaker" than that of the larger community, and that the goals of the black sub-community are only of marginal importance to the total community. This projection of majority values upon the black community leads to an underestimation of the resources which black leaders and people can bring about, especially when they insist that their objectives be seen as part of the total community.

Also, Hunter's definition of power and leadership is biased toward stable forms of leadership. The majority of leaders that he found in the white community, especially the top leaders, were persons who had significant institutional bases of support, or private sources of wealth and income. The absence of such persons in the black leadership group did not cause Hunter to ask whether "stability" is a useful concept in studying black leadership. Instead, he imputed stability to the black leadership group by relating it to the functional needs of the larger white community. Stability of leadership patterns are not necessarily crucial in

the black community, particularly if the goals and objectives of the black community do not value it highly.

Ten years later, Atlanta was studied by M. Kent Jennings.[1] This study was prompted by Hunter's, however, Jennings' conclusions were far different, particularly those concerning black leadership.

Jennings' primary objective was to examine the relationship between a person's political status and his political roles in community leadership. He divided leadership roles into three different categories: attributed influentials, prescribed influentials, and economic dominants. His research was particularly concerned with the attributed influentials because these were the reputed leadership of the community. He first held forty exploratory interviews with persons located in positions of prominence. Next, nominations were made by twenty key informants of those they considered to be the most influential in the community.

Jennings found a series of elites in Atlanta, and the black leaders were equal, not subordinate partners in a political coalition that ran Atlanta. He also felt that it is easiest for blacks to gain high political status on the

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[1]M. Kent Jennings, Community Influentials: The Elites of Atlanta (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1964).

strength of their leadership in strong organizations and institutions.

The research for this study was done prior to the sit-in movement in Atlanta, and Jennings does admit that the movement had a profound effect on leadership in the black community, as well as the community at large. Significantly, though, Jennings found leadership in Atlanta more diversified than that described by Hunter.

Lewis M. Killian and Charles U. Smith[1] studied Tallahassee, Florida, as a city in which a change in the pattern of black leadership seemed to accompany a crisis in race relations. This study was done shortly after the bus boycotts which occurred in the city. Their purpose was to find whether the leadership during the bus boycotts was new to the black community as well as to the white community; and whether they had actually displaced the old group of leaders or was the community split between two groups of leaders.

The structure of the black leadership was assessed through interviews with a panel of twenty-one blacks designated as leaders by social scientists familiar with the community. A panel of twenty-one white leaders was also

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[1]Lewis M. Killian and Charles U. Smith, "Negro Protest Leaders in a Southern Community," Social Forces, 38 (March, 1960), 253-7.

interviewed. These leaders had dealt with the black community in either an official capacity or unofficial one during the bus protest. They also often spoke to the black community in behalf of the white community. All of the subjects were asked a series of questions about black leadership before and after the bus boycotts.

A survey of the adult black population was also made to determine their attitudes toward segregation in general, the bus boycott, and the leadership of the bus protest movement and that following it. The responses to questions executed here were placed on a Likert-type scale.

Killian and Smith found that the black leaders felt that a real change in leadership had taken place between the Pre-Boycott and Post-Boycott periods. Although accomodating leaders were replaced by protest leaders, the new (protest) leaders were not seen by other prominent blacks (the old accomodating leaders) as "compromising" leaders (those able to deal most effectively with whites in the Post-Boycott period). The panel of white leaders perceived black leadership in the same way as the black leaders; and they were not willing to deal with the new leaders because of their uncompromising attitude toward segregation. The black community considered the new leaders as their leaders and supported them, while no longer supporting the old leaders. They were

in favor of the bus protest movement. The black community also felt that the new leaders would be able to maintain their positions of leadership.

Killian and Smith felt that the new black leadership would be a stable and permanent one even though their efforts in the bus protest failed. This was evidenced by the fact that the new leadership is more militant; it seeks gains for the black community through formal demands and requests, boycotts, lawsuits, and voting.

This study differs from Hunter's in many ways. One reason is because of the period of time when the two studies were done. Hunter's was done before the U.S. Supreme Court decisions on desegregation. The data gathering methods differed in attempting to assess black leadership; then, too, Killian and Smith studied one phase of leadership--that during a "crisis" situation. However, Killian and Smith did concur that the leaders during the crisis situation were considered by the black community as their leaders in any situation. It is also significant to note that Killian and Smith did not relate the social characteristics of the leaders studied. Apparently, they did not feel this to be an important factor in studying leadership. They also included the attitudes of the black community in their study; in most studies of leadership, the community which the leaders serve

is completely ignored. The black community is often apprehensive about participating in research studies, because they feel that they gain nothing from them.

Black leadership in Little Rock, Arkansas during the school desegregation crisis was the subject of a study done by Tilman C. Cothran and William Phillips, Jr.[1]

Research methods were employed that were similar to those used by Floyd Hunter. Major emphasis was placed on the social characteristics of leaders during that period, including occupation, age, education, religious affiliation, etc. Leadership typologies were also delegated: protest leaders and accomodating leaders. An assessment of black leadership was made by the black leaders in the community.

Cothran and Phillips found that ministers were significant leaders in the black community while businessmen dominated the white community. They also found that persons characterized as protest leaders were more involved in the desegregation crisis than were the accomodating leaders. Although accomodating leaders didn't play forward roles during the crisis, there was a general unity among all of the black leaders because their goals were the same. There

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[1]Tilman C. Cothran and William Phillips, Jr., "Negro Leadership in a Crisis Situation," Phylon: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture, XXII (Summer, 1961), 107-18.

was little contact between white leaders and black leaders during this time. This is probably because the white leadership in Little Rock deals primarily with accomodating black leaders. Since protest leaders were in the forefront at this time, the white leadership rejected any attempt at interracial communication.

Although the attitudes of the black community toward their leaders were not studied in depth, Cothran and Phillips felt that the protest leaders gain their prestige and status through acceptance by the black community.

Leading Ideas.--This study is descriptive in nature, and it will attempt to show that a change in the patterns of leadership in the black community of Atlanta, Georgia, did occur during the 1960's, primarily as a result of the sit-in movements during 1960 and 1961. Sub-hypotheses which I will examine are that leadership in the black community: (1) may change its pattern as a result of social change; (2) is more a function of the pecularities of the situation rather than the kind of reputation one has; (3) is most demanding, requiring continuous presence, personal participation, dialogue and face-to-face interaction rather than indirect communication and acting through representatives; (4) is based more on immediate accomplishments than past performances; and (5) is distributed among people of a wide variety of social

and economic circumstances and is not limited to a prestigious elite of high socio-economic status.

With these thoughts in mind, the major concepts used will refer to the different types of leadership generally found in black communities. Oliver C. Cox has designated five different types, however, three of them will be used in this analysis: conservative, compromise, and direct-action (protest).[1]

The conservative leader is one who has already established himself as a leader among his people, and is able to exploit his power in the interest of the power structure. He is not an enemy of his people; he merely dictates that a given situation is expedient to avoid the common cause and make peace with the power structure. He identifies the power structure as the best friend of the people and serves as a principal intermediary in securing advantages from this "friend" that will apparently outweigh those which may be secured by the people through their insistence upon ends embodied in their common cause.

The compromise leader is one who has become wedged in between protests and conservatism. His fundamental atti-

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[1]Oliver C. Cox, "Leadership Among Negroes in the United States," in Studies in Leadership, ed. by Alvin W. Gouldner (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1950), pp. 228-71.

tudes are protest attitudes; yet because of his dependent relationship to the power structure, he has to act as if he was sympathetic with its interests. In essence he clings to principles, but submits to the power structure for a price.

On the other hand, the protest (referred to in this study as direct action) leader employs protest as its main line of action and seeks to influence public opinion in this way. As a result, effective political pressure in favor of civil rights for blacks would be brought to bear upon the power structure. It is also characterized by bringing about collective organization and may include mobilization of the entire black community.

Techniques and Tools.--This study was carried on almost completely by a socio-historical analysis of leadership in the black community primarily during the sit-in movements of 1960 and 1961. An identification of significant events, conflicts, crises, etc., in the black community was made and includes a description of these events and an assessment of their outcome.

The persons involved in these activities were also determined, as well as their social attributes and how they became involved. Generally, these persons are black leaders. Their differences were rated and a comparative analysis was made in the characteristics of leaders associated with

different kinds of events, conflicts, and crises that were significant to the black community.

This method of analysis is most important because Atlanta has been characterized by different patterns of black leadership during a given period of time. Most black leaders have been recognized and acknowledged by the black community during crisis situations, therefore, it will be worthwhile to see the techniques they tend to develop in leading the community.

Types of data.--The socio-historical analysis drew upon existing documents and also involved original research, including interviews with twelve persons directly or peripherally involved in the events which occurred. The enumeration of outstanding events and crises during the movement and following it, required researching back editions of newspapers and magazines. The determination of who was involved and what each person did was derived from the various documents and from the twelve interviews which were of the open-ended type.

Theoretical orientation.--The major thesis of this study is social change, as it has affected leadership in the black community in Atlanta.

Until recently, theories of social change described it as if it were inevitable and not under man's control--a

simple movement from past to future. However, a different orientation is now beginning to emerge which sees social change as a consequence of man's actions, and therefore under his control. Because of this orientation, new theories have developed and are termed, "theories of directed social change."[1]

In his book, Resources for Social Change, James Coleman has drawn together some of these new theories and applied them to particular problems of blacks in the United States including their social, economic, and political positions. These theories are presented as possible ways black people may use the required knowledge as an aid to social policy at all levels of social action.

Since this study is concerned with the political power of blacks, Coleman's theories will be incorporated therein. The sit-in movements can be seen as a form of directed social change which has increased the amount of political power among blacks. As a result, this has decreased the "deficit of black freedom of action among them."[2] Coleman uses the phrase "freedom of (social) action" to mean

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[1]James S. Coleman, Resources for Social Change: Race in the United States (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1971), p. 76.

[2]Ibid., p. ix.

social integration, civil rights, and other similar terms. He uses this phrase because, "it expresses the essential attributes of which the Negro, as a Negro, has been deprived in American society."[1]

Because blacks are becoming increasingly aware of the resources available to them to effect social change. Coleman further theorizes that leadership among blacks is dependent upon this change. Leaders utilize different methods and techniques in leading the community, depending on the situation. These methods include the utilization of direct action and electoral assets, including legal and legislative resources. These methods are now being used extensively by black leaders.

This thesis attempts to follow the recent trend of directed social change, by utilizing the theories that Coleman has presented, particularly in the final analysis.

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[1] Ibid., p. 7.

CHAPTER II

PATTERNS OF LEADERSHIP IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Atlanta is considered the foremost city in the Deep South partly because of its progressive view toward race relations. Because of the shrewdness of its businessmen who wished to maintain good fortune for the city, Atlanta appeared racially moderate in order to contrast itself with other Southern cities, and as a result, to attract more business. This meant that Atlanta has experienced an external pressure to develop at least the image of racial moderation, and to the degree that a successful image must have a substantive base, Atlanta has made racial progress earlier than most other cities.

An internal pressure has also made that progress both necessary and possible. Black voting in Georgia started in 1946 with the end of the white primary in the Primus King case.[1] A massive voter registration campaign was staged in

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[1]Clarence A. Bacote, "The Negro in Atlanta Politics," Phylon: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture, XVI (Fourth Quarter, 1955), 345.

the black community and was spearheaded by the All Citizens Registration Committee and the Atlanta Urban League. By May, 1947, when the campaign officially closed, there were 24,137 blacks on the registration books in Fulton County, of whom 21,244 lived in Atlanta.[1]

Leadership before 1960: conservative and compromising.--Careful organization and planning was required to keep this new group of voters together. In 1949, the black Democrats, headed by a leading black attorney, and the black Republicans, headed by a retired railroad mail clerk and civic leader, joined hands and formed the Atlanta Negro Voters League. This bipartisan group worked primarily in local elections as a unit behind the most desirable candidates in the Democratic primary. The League maintained a balance between Republicans and Democrats and in addition to the lawyer and civic leader who served as co-chairmen, the group included two ministers, a leader of the Atlanta Urban League, the publisher of the Atlanta Daily World, the president of Atlanta University, the Executive Secretary of the YMCA, and a well known businessman.

The mayor of Atlanta bargained mainly with this group; he advised them regularly on the acceptability of each

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[1]Ibid., p. 348.

candidate running for office.[1] The League would then debate and decide whether to endorse. Once they reached a decision, they distributed endorsement cards throughout the black community. The black voters, for the most part, voted the recommended slate 100 percent, thus creating a bloc vote in the black community.

The League also worked at tackling other problems in the city. There were very rigid segregation laws and practices, white brutality and a general feeling that Negroes had to stay in their places. In trying to bring about change they realized that their job would be hard because they had not endorsed many liberals in the elections. Because there were not many, they would endorse the lesser of the two evils. They did get black police officers and a few segregation laws off the books.

The Negro Voters League was the spokesman for the black community without challenge. They were criticized by certain elements in the white community for giving blacks a bloc vote, but this is what gave them power to receive favorable response from City Hall. One person interviewed stated:

> The most important thing the Negro Voters League did was to bring unity to the black community.

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[1]Harry Holloway, The Politics of the Southern Negro (New York: Random House, Inc., 1969), pp. 198-9.

> There was little contact between blacks and whites. The mayor spoke with members of the Voters League. . . they kept things straight and quiet in the black community.

Unmistakably, the leaders of the black community were members of the black upper class. Of the many black leaders, none had clear ties to the black masses. In some ways the ministers had potentially the greatest access to the community through their congregations. On the other hand, the black businessmen exerted a pervasive control over the black community. Of the primary political coalition of black leaders, all were officers of the three major black business institutions in Atlanta: Citizens Trust Company, Atlanta Life Insurance Company, and the Mutual Federal Savings and Loan Association. These men were also on the Board of Directors of the major churches, the local NAACP office, and the black YMCA where political discussions were held.

The result of this pattern was that any civil rights activity engaged in by these men was essentially elitist and conservative in nature and contributed little to the improvement of the conditions endured by large numbers of impoverished blacks in Atlanta. One of the leaders of the sit-in movement made the following comment:

> These black leaders knew they had succeeded in a segregated society, but realized the inherent ambivalence of their success. Therefore, even

> though the 1960 civil rights movement challenged the basis of their success, they knew that a change must come.

To some degree, a newer type of leadership was approached in Atlanta in 1957 with the desegregation of the Atlanta buses. The resolution of this issue refined the Atlanta way of handling racial crises and developed a half-way model somewhere between indirect court action and negotiation and direct action.

In one sense, the desegregation of the buses in Atlanta should have forewarned Atlanta's black and white leaders of what would come. While this series of events prescribed a half-way model for the solution of racial disputes in Atlanta, it also revealed the new forces pressing for more direct action leadership.

In June, 1957, black and white leaders and the president of the Atlanta Transit Company, worked out elaborate plans for a test of the Georgia bus segregation laws. The mayor wished to delay the test, but the black leaders, under pressure from a group of students and young professionals, and from Martin Luther King's Montgomery boycott, insisted on immediate implementation. One of the leading black minister's of the city, led several other ministers in boarding a bus at a pre-arranged time. The Chief of Police immediately arrested and booked them.

Two court tests ensued from the arrests challenging the seating laws violated due process; one filed by the minister who led the demonstrations, in state court, and another by the president of the local NAACP (also a minister), in federal court.

These incidents formed a precedent for later activity in both the white and black leaders' minds. The pattern was established: a single activity, usually a demonstration, followed by court testing procedures, a cessation of further activity, and a return to segregation until the case was decided. This half-way model, a compromise between direct and indirect action was accepted by both communities. In the early phase of the sit-ins, this was the type of model both sides sought to follow.

The bus desegregation had other effects. It demonstrated potential factional splits in the leadership of the black community. The president of the NAACP was not a veteran of the earlier 1950's Atlanta activities. His election to the presidency signified increased "militancy" for that organization. The rivalry between he and the other minister had the effect of pushing both factions toward stronger actions of greater appeal and benefit for the black community. These events also took place without the active participation of the officials of Atlanta University. It is evident that

these developments represented some changes in the make-up of the black community's leadership coalition.

The first phase: compromising leadership.--Adherence to the 1957 bus desegregation model characterized the first phase of the Atlanta sit-in movement, from February, 1960, through the summer.

After the Greensboro sit-ins, few in Atlanta felt that the city would escape the sit-in movement. Both the black and white communities reacted almost immediately. The reaction in the adult black community was mixed, but favorable.

On February 5th, three Morehouse college students met to discuss the role their school should play in the new movement. After enlisting the help of other students in the Atlanta University Complex, they formed a steering committee of three representatives from each college. The leaders of the group visited the president of Morehouse College to inform him of their intentions. He told them to go ahead, and emphasized that the presidents of the six institutions supported the students and he personally, "would have been dismayed had they not participated in this Southwide revolution."[1] However, an ex-student leader mentioned that:

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[1]Benjamin E. Mays, Born to Rebel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 288.

> The university complex was split over support for the students. While no direct pressure was exerted, the presidents continually reminded the students that their central purpose was education.

On February 20th, the student steering committee met with the Council of Presidents of the Atlanta University Complex and agreed to continue these informational sessions twice a week. The continual meetings with the black administrators had their effects. Around March 1st, the president of Spelman College suggested that the students preceed their protests with a statement of grievances.[1] The students then formed a committee to draw up a manifesto for the Atlanta community.

This tactic had been foreshadowed in January by a group of young black professionals, The Atlanta Committee for Cooperative Action (ACCA), who produced a booklet, "A Second Look, the Negro Citizen in Atlanta," which described the aberrations from Atlanta's image of moderate race relations.[2] This committee in a sense represented the burgeoning new generation of leadership within the black political coalition, as they were professional businessmen and educators. They felt that for the most part, the older black leadership

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[1] Ibid., p. 288.

[2] The Atlanta Committee for Cooperative Action, A Second Look, the Negro Citizen in Atlanta (Atlanta: The Atlanta Committee for Cooperative Action, 1960).

was moving too slow and things needed to be accomplished now. However, ACCA was not being accepted by the black people as their leaders at this time. The students admired and respected the members of this group, as their manifesto reflected the ACCA lead, but appeared in a much more dramatic fashion.

The student committee called itself the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights (COAHR) following the title of their manifesto placed in the Atlanta Daily World, Constitution, and Journal, on March 9th, "An Appeal for Human Rights." It stated the students' support of the other sit-in protests, citing the slow pace of racial progress as particularly galling. The students listed the areas of inequity and injustice in Atlanta and Georgia which they intended to remedy: education, jobs, housing, voting, law-enforcement, hospitals, and public facilities.

The President of both Atlanta University and the Council of Presidents acted as an agent and placed the ad in the papers. He had succeeded in channeling the first activity away from a sit-in.

Reactions to the ad revealed surprise, but also support. The president of the NAACP applauded it, but had not been informed in advance, nor had any of the other adult black leaders.

The white community also heralded the ad. Because of it, they felt the sit-ins would not occur in Atlanta. Although the Appeal was a scathing commentary on the real conditions in Atlanta and tarnished its image, whites had an ambivalent reaction: they were glad to escape street demonstrations, but were apprehensive of what the Appeal meant.

For the black community, the Appeal was very much a joint effort between young and old. It was emphasized by an ex-student leader that "it drew on the Urban League, the NAACP, the ACCA, and the Atlanta Council on Human Relations." The solid support of the black community benefited the students; cooperation insured the older members of the black coalition some influence over the students. It represented a good compromise between direct and indirect action.

What the college presidents and other black leaders did not know was that on March 15th, a sit-in demonstration would be conducted at ten downtown public lunch counters. Over 200 students, under the direction of COAHR attempted to get food service at the public transportation terminals, at state, city, and county office buildings, and at cafeterias in federal office buildings. These particular places were selected because they were federally tax-supported or they were places where the interstate commerce clause of the Constitution gave the federal courts jurisdiction. Seventy-

seven students were arrested.[1]

All of Atlanta was shaken up and surprised that the students had staged a sit-in. White politicians started calling the members of the Negro Voters League in an attempt to find out what was going on; however, the League did not know and could not help them. The League did try to reason with the students to wait and let them negotiate a settlement with the white leaders. However, the students would not listen and this gave the ACCA a chance to move into the forefront. ACCA furnished lawyers for the students and gave them support in their efforts; even to the extent that when the Daily World denounced the students for acting without sound guidance, they organized a newspaper of their own, The Inquirer, a few months later.

The presidents of the six colleges attempted to open negotiations with downtown businessmen suggesting to them and urging them to use their influence to get the eating places opened to blacks without the need of further demonstrations. They received firm rebuffs.[2]

A commemoration march was held on May 17th, signifying the seventh anniversary of the 1954 school decisions.

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[1]Lonnie King, "Let Freedom Ring," Atlanta Inquirer, September 12, 1960, p. 4.

[2]Mays, op. cit., p. 291.

The march was peaceful and orderly, and no arrests were made.

The black community reflected both a continued attempt to maintain unity and emerging political splits. The chairman of COAHR asked an older leader (a minister) to form and direct a Student-Adult Liason Committee. The Committee's function was to raise money, arrange community meetings, and coordinate demonstration logistics, and obtain adult marchers whenever possible. The Committee ran an advertisement (in the Constitution on May 30th), which was signed by twelve black organizations comprised mostly of businessmen (who had provided bail money), ministers, and civil rights organizations.[1] Its purpose was to show that the adult blacks, particularly those who might be classed as well off, supported the students' actions.

The significant omissions were those signatures of any of the Atlanta University Center personnel, of the editor of the Daily World, and of the head of the black YMCA. This division in the black community would become more marked with time, as the influence of the members of the original black political coalition declined and the black leadership became more diversified.

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[1] "An Endorsement in Support of Human Dignity," Atlanta Constitution, May 30, 1960, p. 20.

After the May 17th march, student activity subsided somewhat and the universities closed for the summer and there were not sufficient people for major marches. Several college students picketed the largest downtown department store on June 26th, but brief negotiations between the store owners and some black adult leaders failed.

On October 19th, the sit-ins resumed at each lunch counter in the largest department store in the city as well as other variety and department stores. Thirty-five persons were arrested at the largest department store. They refused to leave, wishing to invoke arrest to implement their "jail-no-bail" tactic. Seventeen persons at the other stores were also arrested.

The next day, pickets and sit-ins took place at train stations as well as downtown stores. More people were arrested and sentenced to ten days at the city prison farm. The lunch counters closed down, but demonstrations continued.

On October 22nd, the mayor announced that he had contacted leaders on both sides, and requested a sixty to ninety day truce, while negotiations were worked out. He met with a group gathered by three members of the Negro Voters League and they agreed to a thirty day truce. The students denied that they had been contacted, but since the leaders of COAHR were in jail, the acting chairman (a young

minister) accepted the truce. The mayor then used his power of pardon to release the students on their signatures and indicated he would contact merchants and state and county officials to have all charges dropped. He asked the foremost black attorney and a black minister to mediate in the black community.

The negotiations during the truce occurred essentially between two committees with the mayor traveling back and forth between the students and black adults, and the downtown merchants. This was the old method of compromise, but it failed because of an unwillingness to compromise on the part of both blacks and whites. The mayor then asked for an extension of the truce. The students first agreed to an extension, but later decided to cancel the agreement.

One reason the negotiations failed may have been the merchants attempt to divide and conquer the black leadership. The owner and the chairman of the board of the largest downtown department store met with four members of the Negro Voters League. The merchants were accustomed to thinking these men the leaders of the black community, as they were in "the old days." The meeting was cancelled, however, as the press found out about it.

At this point, there had been sporadic, visible, well-organized protests; interrupted by weeks of behind the scenes

attempts at negotiations and compromise. Several old black leaders were beginning to be bypassed. On the other hand, the students protested things older blacks had always known were wrong; some of the older black leaders were willing to follow the students both out of moral sympathy and in an attempt to maintain some of their previous control over the black community.

The emergence of direct-action leadership.--On November 25th, the sit-ins and picketing resumed. Increasingly, the adult black community became involved and supported the new demonstrations; some participated. The demonstrations and sit-ins continued through Christmas. The stores laid off 400 to 600 black lunch room employees. This constituted a strong counter-pressure on the movement.

On January 8th, the Federal Reserve Bank announced that department store sales were down ten percent in Metropolitan Atlanta and thirteen percent in downtown Atlanta as compared with the previous year.[1]

The Student-Adult Liason Committee invited representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, the Junior Chamber, and the Atlanta Merchants Retail Association, to meet with

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[1]John Petroff, "The Effects of Student Boycotts Upon the Purchasing Power of Negro Families in Atlanta, Georgia," Phylon: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture, XXIV (Fall, 1963),266-7.

representatives of COAHR and the Committee in an "exploratory conference on the issue involved in our selective buying campaign."[1] All groups turned the Committee's offer down. The president of the Chamber of Commerce remarked, "Negro students. . . don't necessarily represent a majority of the Negro population or the leaders of the Negro community."[2] By this time, the students fully realized that their power lay in the boycott and in continued visible pressure.

By February 7th, students mounted what became the final blow at arriving at some settlement; two weeks of sit-ins, demonstrations, and arrests. Obeying an oath to adhere to non-violence and to remain in jail without posting bond, over eighty students filled the Atlanta jails. The chairman and co-chairman of COAHR were arrested the first day but they posted bond so that they might direct the action which lasted until February 20th. A group of black doctors as well as several ministers were arrested while participating, during the same period.

On February 15th, there was a mass meeting of 1600

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[1]"Sit-in Camp Asks New Negotiations," Atlanta Constitution, December 13, 1960, p. 4.

[2]"Allen, Ross Hit Maddox Racial Plan," Atlanta Constitution, December 12, 1960, p. 6.

persons at a black church, of which the crowd was sixty percent adults, to demonstrate support for the jailed students.

The students finally left the jails on February 23rd, after a petition was received from the black adults of Atlanta asking them to come out and pledging all out support for the "duration of the movement."[1]

Negotiations were progressing by this time, and the students believed that they had achieved their purposes of opposition to segregation and the rallying of older black support.

One of the chairmen of the Negro Voters League reopened negotiations by request of the students. He arranged bi-weekly meetings with about twenty-five black leaders, including old leaders, young businessmen, and students; and white leaders, which lasted three to four hours each. These were the first face-to-face meetings with whites.

The negotiations were far from easy and they affected some of the perceptions each community had about each other. The white leaders reasoned that if school desegregation went smoothly, then lunch-counter desegregation would also, and they insisted on tying these two together. The black leaders insisted that the lunch counters be desegregated and that the

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[1]"Students Leave Jail, Adults: We'll Back You," Atlanta Inquirer, February 25, 1961, p. 1.

laid-off blacks be re-hired. Eventually, the re-hiring was traded for delayed desegregation.

By February 23rd, when the last students left jail, the negotiations were probably reached: an end to the boycotts, sit-ins and picketing; reopening of the lunch counters on a segregated basis; then desegregation of the lunch counters sometime after school desegregation, but before October 15, 1961; and the re-hiring of as many black employees as possible. A few details remained. Each group had to report back to the Chamber of Commerce and the black community.

By March 7th, the Chamber had released a statement, which one of the black leaders (the president of Atlanta University) had written, and another (a leading attorney) took to the newspapers. He acted as messenger to indicate the black community's support. Both parties felt that the relationship which had existed between the races for a long number of years should be reinstated in Atlanta in every way possible.

This statement met with enthusiastic response from the mayor and the white press. For white Atlanta, the settlement was both classic and real. Blacks and whites did meet together directly rather than working through the mayor, and a larger proportion of the black community was represented

through the young blacks present. It reestablished the coalition pattern on a broader base and with a new recognition of the make-up of the black community.

However, a portion of the statement indicated a cognizance that the negotiations could not confidently speak for everyone. The white businessmen could more directly represent other businessmen and the white community through the Chamber of Commerce than the black negotiators could represent the black community. Although the press release indicated that the black negotiators could represent "the principal leadership of the black group," immediate questioning of the settlement and therefore of the "principal leadership" arose in the black community.[1]

The initial statement was much more vague than the actual agreement reached. It did not mention the target date of October 15th, or the rehiring of black employees. The Chamber released a subsequent statement explaining that the statement assured lunch counter desegregation within the next six months and they would answer any questions about the settlement.

But, this reassurance was not sufficient to halt an uproar in the black community. It only served to intensify

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[1]"Sit-in Terms Under Fire; L. King Out, In Again," Atlanta Inquirer, March 11, 1961, pp. 1,12.

it. An initial meeting to explain the settlement was dissolved after much debate. In essence, the black community was sharply critical of the black leaders as well as the white leaders.[1] The Student-Adult Liason Committee held a mass meeting on March 10th, in an attempt to clarify the settlement. The audience at the meeting shouted down the leaders--adult and student, who pleaded that the agreement was a "necessary compromise." The student leaders offered to resign, but the audience would not accept, indicating that they felt the older blacks were responsible for the compromise settlement.[2] The criticism centered on the fact that desegregation was not immediate.

When the meeting adjourned, there was no certainty of what would happen next. The black Voice of Freedom newspaper of March 12th, riddled the settlement as a sellout by the "handkerchief heads."

> In short, the Atlanta black bourgeoisie leadership and their student puppets have once again supported the forces of reaction which have had every form of humiliation and cruelty heaped upon our people; they have allowed themselves to be used, tricked, and hoodwinked.[3]

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[1] Ibid., p. 12.

[2] "Leaders Seek Unity," Atlanta Inquirer, March 18, 1961, p. 1.

[3] Editorial, Voice of Freedom, March 12, 1961.

While this group did not itself enjoy great support in the black community, their sentiments were certainly present at the meeting that night.

The picketing continued, but no major action resulted from it. Some of the protest of the settlement centered on assertions that Atlanta's black leadership pattern had not changed. However, even though the accession to power of new elements of the black community was slow, it did occur, and new alignments were evident in the black community of Atlanta. Although some members of the coalition were left behind during the movement, some of them had managed to change their outlook.

Throughout the spring and summer, some students continued to picket while further negotiations were worked out. Finally, September 27th was the day selected to begin lunch counter desegregation. Two hundred students were preselected and tested 177 lunch counters in 75 stores without incident.

1961 was also an election year in Atlanta. Differences among black leadership occurred at this time. The Negro Voters League endorsed the president of the Chamber of Commerce for mayor, while the students and younger leaders (composed primarily of members of the ACCA) endorsed another candidate. As a result, this created some divisions in the black community, and a split in the black vote was predicted;

however, the Negro Voters League carried seventy-three percent of the black vote to their candidate. Three black leaders ran for aldermanic positions in the same election. The Voters League endorsed only one of the blacks, a businessman' yet none of the blacks were elected.

The student movement did not end with the lunch counter settlement. One leader recalled that it lasted fully another year or so, as long as the original members of COAHR remained in Atlanta. The sit-ins of 1960 and 1961 stand out, however, as the most significant activity during this time because they demonstrated the power of the black community to demand action, thus bring about social change. Further, they heightened the consciousness of the black community beyond the acceptance of tokenism.

An incident in 1963 actually revealed a new awareness and the new political forces in the black community which had emerged. Several black families had moved into a white section in southwest Atlanta. To alleviate white tension, the mayor constructed a barricade in the middle of the integrated street to separate black and white homes. The enraged black community compared the barricade to the Berlin Wall and threatened political retaliation. The mayor called in the leaders of the Negro Voters League to talk things over. However, the League joined COAHR, ACCA, NAACP, and other local

groups in the All Citizens Committee for Better City Planning, and refused to talk to the mayor until he tore down the barricade. This incident marked the erosion of the old style of black leadership that began in 1957 and developed fully in 1961. This erosion was the second important effect of the Atlanta sit-in movement.

This determination to resist in 1963 was a graphic example of the end of any monolithic black leadership. It demonstrated what should have been obvious in 1961: that the community was factional and very different from the whites' traditional perception of it. The new president of the local NAACP said in 1963:

> It's a matter now of a new team coming into the game. We're saying, your team's done fine, but it's getting tired. New blood is coming in. We're going to take the ball from here.[1]

The absence of complete acknowledgement of the truth of these statements in 1961 emphasized the slowness with which the older blacks or whites wished to give up the old coalition, which was essentially a base of power for blacks, and comfort for the whites. But the courageous use of new kinds of power and leadership by the students, younger leaders, a few older leaders, and the aroused black community

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[1]Charles Silberman, Crisis in Black and White (New York: Random House, Inc., 1964), p. 204.

left the old alignments far behind. Leadership utilizing direct action methods and techniques had emerged.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP PATTERNS

The events described in the last chapter show that changes occurred in the patterns of leadership in the black community primarily as a result of the civil rights movement of the early 1960's. These changes do not necessarily mean that one group of leaders, rather than another, became more recognized by the black community as their leaders. It is also possible for the methods and techniques used by a group of leaders to change as a result of social change. Although an entirely new group of leaders began to emerge in the early 1960's, it is worthwhile to note that some of the older leaders changed their pattern from a conservative and compromising leadership to that of the direct action type.

James Coleman theorized that there are generally two types of assets which may be used by black leaders in order to effect social change. These are: electoral assets, which include the vote in elections, black representatives in

legislature and other political offices; and action assets, or assets used outside the electoral process, usually in direct action which presses demands for social change.[1]

When the white primary was abolished in Georgia in 1946, thus enabling blacks to vote in all elections, the coalition of black leaders which formed at this time sought to organize the newly acquired voting power of the black community. They worked within the framework of utilizing their electoral assets to the fullest possible extent. Since the number of black votes was not sufficient to elect blacks to legislative and other political offices, the black leaders influenced the community to try to elect those persons who might give blacks more rights.

During the early 1960's, the political assets and resultant patterns of leadership in the black community lay in the development of extensive devices for exerting demands on the white community outside the electoral channels of politics. According to Coleman, "these resources may take various forms, ranging from court cases to actions which violate the law."[2] In Atlanta, the resources used included non-violent action, demonstrations aimed at changing laws

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[1]Coleman, op. cit., pp. 74-5.

[2]Ibid., p. 76.

regarded as iniquitous, and demonstrations aimed at exercising a legally protected right. All of these actions have the element of collective organization in common and usually sought to mobilize the community. The explicit aim was to exert political pressure.

Coleman illustrated a model for direct action leadership[1] which may be applied to this study as the most probable reason that the pattern of leadership changed in Atlanta.

Consider a social conflict (desegregation of lunch counters), with one side the administrative establishment (the white leadership) and the other a conflict group (the students). If the conflict group carries out an agressive act of civil disobedience (sit-ins and demonstrations), then the administration and behind them the general community will ordinarily retaliate. The conflict group will in turn be unified by the agressive response, and respond agressively in turn and the battle will be on. If the conflict group exerts enough pressure, they can bring about social change.

Most organizations in the civil rights movement were born in conflict groups. This gives them certain characteristics: their goals are to win in a social conflict; they

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[1] Ibid., pp. 77-8.

tend to be sustained by conflict; leadership of the organization lies with those who are most successful in conflict; and each organization tends to develop particular styles, strategies, and arenas of conflict.

These organizations tend to be shaped and structured by their opposition and by the terms of the dispute. This is most obvious in the effect of polarization upon the nature of leadership. As a dispute becomes polarized, those leaders who urge collaboration and compromise can no longer gain the support of the community which they lead; those leaders who more closely follow the wishes of the community, are recognized as leaders by the community. During the sit-ins, the older established black leadership realized the great sum of momentum gained by the students and saw that the inertia could not be reversed. As a result, they began to work with the students, who had the support of the general black community, in bringing about social change.

Legal and legislative resources may also serve as primary mechanisms for change. Generalized, the theory is that social change can be effectively brought about through legal statutes aimed at prohibiting certain actions, enforcing others, or allowing others. In this theory, the court is the principal arena of social action, any advocate of social change implements his advocacy by obtaining court rulings.

A slightly different theory is held by some legislators, who see the same process, though the principal arena of social action is the legislature and social change is implemented by change in the law.[1]

The theory behind most civil rights activity, as pointed out above, is that: if the white community's barriers to opportunity for blacks are removed, blacks will seize the opportunity and thus overcome the economic, political, or social deficit. The theory of legal and legislative resources is similar to the other, in that, the implicit assumption that the principal barrier to social change is the absence of the appropriate institutional or legal structure. In part the difference between the theories is one of number: "the legal and legislative theories imply that there exist at least a few men in society who will pursue the goals relevant to the role. The civil rights theory implies that a large number of blacks will be able to adequately fill a new set of roles that is opened to them."[2]

Electoral assets and legal and legislative assets have come to be used more extensively by blacks in Atlanta

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[1] Ibid., p. 54.

[2] Ibid., pp. 55-6.

subsequent to the sit-in movement. Direct action methods are still used, but not to the same degree or dependence. It would be worthwhile to note what changes and gains in leadership and political power blacks have gained since 1961 in view of these theories.

In 1963, leaders of the black community organized into a group known as the Summit Leadership Conference. All of the leadership came from the group known as the Atlanta Committee for Cooperative Action. The Negro Voters League last functioned as a complete group in the 1961 city election and stopped meeting thereafter. In February, 1967, the membership of the Leadership Conference started community meetings and reorganized into the Metropolitan Summit Leadership Congress. Another group had been organized in the city known as Young Men on the Go. This group is made up of former student leaders and other young businessmen. They have not yet attempted to move out to the forefront and exert what influence they might have.

There were other groups that engaged in organizing the black community around issues. These organizations were the NAACP, the Atlanta Urban League, and the Butler Street YMCA. These agencies organized communities more on an ad hoc basis, with the organization going out of existence when the issue was settled.

The sixties have also seen the rise of more community participation in groups trying to be instrumental in bringing about change of all types. Economic Opportunity Atlanta and the Anti-Poverty program were the first major organizations to organize community groups. Social organization in the black community is very important.[1] The persons involved in these groups know the problems of their community and can make recommendations with the community to help alleviate some of the existing conditions. Most times, however, their participation is restricted to an issue in their neighborhood, rather than an issue with city wide support.

Spontaneous action groups which formed during this time influenced direct or indirectly the operational policies of most community organizations. One executive stated:

> Every issue that concerned the city of Atlanta had poor representation or advocates for the poor and the reasons they have representation is because they have identified the problem and are demanding that it be solved and for the most part they are not accepting any solution for solving the problem, other than their own.

An example of a spontaneous group in action was when the Board of Education decided to add classrooms to the already large high school in one black community. The residents wanted another high school instead. They called a mass

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[1] Ibid., pp. 37-42.

meeting in the area and drew up a petition to present to the Board of Education, asking for another school instead of enlarging the present one. The Board voted to do further study in the area before anything was done.

The major leadership organizations which were in the city during the sixties, sometimes worked together for a common goal, yet at other times they have worked independently of each other.

Black representation in Georgia began in 1962 when an Atlanta attorney took advantage of reapportionment in the Georgia Senate, and won a seat. When he took office in 1963, he was the first black lawmaker since Reconstruction to serve in Georgia. In 1964, another Atlanta attorney became Georgia's second black legislator also going to the Senate. When the House of Representatives was reapportioned in 1965, seven blacks were elected to serve Georgia that year, and five of them were from Atlanta. The most widely publicized of these leaders was a former student leader who became a national celebrity when the lawmakers refused to seat him because of his anti-war sentiments.

A real estate man won a position on the Aldermanic Board in the Atlanta city elections of 1965; and two persons were elected to the Board of Education.

Significant changes in Atlanta politics occurred in

1969. The city elections of that year seem to have been another turning point in the political history of the city. The third political ward of the city was split in 1968, thus creating another position on the Aldermanic Board. In the 1969 election, the number of blacks on the Board of Aldermen increased from one to five, and the number of persons on the Board of Education rose from two to three. Moreover, the city elected a young black attorney as vice-mayor.

This election also signified an alteration in the voting patterns of Atlanta and the emergence of a new "coalition" of voters. The mayor (Jewish), vice-mayor, and other blacks elected to office were elected almost by a completely different group of voters from that which previously seemed to control city politics. Whether this new "coalition" stays together and extends its influence or whether different alliances are forged in the future, the events of 1969 seem to signal an end of an era in Atlanta politics.

Since 1953, at least, Atlanta's mayors and other officials had been chosen by a coalition composed of virtually all black voters, most of the middle and upper class whites who live on the northside of the city and a minority of whites elsewhere. Aligned against this group were lower and working class whites, located in the center and on the southside of the city. The lower class and working class whites

always opposed the coalition of blacks and upper class whites and were always defeated.[1]

During 1969, almost all blacks and a minority of whites from all areas of the city, made up the group that supported the winners above. Thus, upper-middle class whites and the city's traditional "power structure" (as defined by Floyd Hunter), lost their former position of influence in deciding city elections, while blacks greatly enhanced their influences.

The reasons for this change resulted from a combination of factors. One was the breakup of the traditional coalition between black and white leaders over the question of which candidate to support. In this election, black voters were not willing to support the choice of the white business leaders. Rather than having only the usual choice between the favorite of upper class whites and another candidate whose racial views made them anathema, black voters in 1969 had additional alternatives. For the first time, there was a black candiate, and also a white candidate whose reputation was more liberal than other white candidates, past or present.

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[1]Jack Walker, "Negro Voting in Atlanta: 1953-1961," Phylon: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture, XXIV (Winter, 1963), 379-87.

A second factor was the continuous growth of black voting strength in Atlanta. The proportion of blacks among the city's registered voters increased from about twenty-nine percent in 1961 to forty-one percent in 1969. This growth of black voting strength was due both to the increase in the proportion of blacks in the total population, which rose from thirty-eight percent in 1960 to forty-nine percent in 1969, and to an increase in the proportion of eligible blacks who are registered to vote.[1]

As the sixties progressed, leadership in the black community also moved forward, changing its methods as social change occurred in an effort to bring about further social change. The sit-in movement provided the force which was necessary for the black leadership to realize that their function was not to lead each other, but rather, the community of which they are an integral part.

The black community itself is responsible for many of the changes in the patterns of leadership which occurred. Prior to the sit-ins, the white leadership structure dictated who the black leaders were. As the black community became increasingly aware of the resources available to them to bring about social change, they began to designate who

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[1]Charles S. Rooks, The Atlanta Election of 1969 (Atlanta: Voter Education Project, Inc., 1970), p. 3.

they wished to represent them. As a result the white community has finally become knowledgeable of the many divergences of leadership that have evolved during the 1960's.

During the early sixties, direct action methods were the only means by which the deficit in black freedom of action could be reduced. Compromising and negotiating were utilized to the fullest extent, yet only through persistently exerting pressure on the white power structure, could social change come about. However, black political power and efficacy through usual channels of democratic politics such as voting has increased. In turn, the community was able to elect their leaders to positions in the legislature and local political offices; and these positions can constitute real positions of power and leadership.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there were any changes in the patterns of leadership in the black community of Atlanta, Georgia, during the 1960's. It was done primarily through a socio-historical analysis of events, conflicts, and crises which occurred during this time and which were significant to the black community.

The study revealed that changes in the patterns of leadership did occur during this period. The Atlanta civil rights movement of 1960 and 1961 initiated many changes in the social and political life of the city, and was the primary reason for the changing black leadership patterns.

Several sub-hypotheses were examined in this study. These hypotheses stated that leadership in the black community: (1) may change its pattern as a result of social change; (2) is more a function of the pecularities of the situation rather than the kind of reputation one has; (3) is

most demanding, requiring continuous presence, personal participation, dialogue, and face-to-face interaction rather than indirect communication and acting through representatives; (4) is based more on immediate accomplishments than past performances; and (5) is distributed among people of a wide variety of social and economic circumstances and is not limited to a prestigious elite of high socio-economic status.

It was shown that prior to 1960, black leadership consisted of one group of leaders who negotiated and compromised with the major white leaders of the city, in an effort to obtain rights for the black community. This leadership pattern was effective only to the extent that the leaders were successful in changing a few minor social policies, but nothing major in benefiting the black community.

The sit-ins that occurred during 1960 and 1961 were successful in bringing about a change in social policy by desegregating the lunch counters and other public facilities in the city, in a much shorter period of time than one group could effect in ten years. The various situations and events involved the reputed black leaders, students, and an emerging younger leadership. The students can not be properly termed as leaders in the black community, however, they were

instrumental as being an important source of force in the community.

The new patterns of leadership which emerged as a result of this movement, took several years to actually become visible. The students and younger leadership groups did not arrogantly surplant the older black leaders overnight. The process of change witnessed intermediate periods of cooperation and compromise with the white community as well as the students; and then culminated, not in a new monolithic black leadership with the students and younger leadership on top, but rather, in a diverse political community with militant, conservative, and intermediate factions.

Because of this new make-up of black leadership, it can be seen that leadership in the black community is now more a function of the pecularities of the situation, rather than the kind of reputation one has. During the sit-ins and for some time after, direct-action techniques and resources were utilized to a great extent by black leaders. As the sixties progressed, more legal and legislative and electoral resources have become available to black leaders. A rise in community participation groups has also occurred and these persons have tried to bring about change of all types in their own communities. Major black organizations have been instrumental in organizing these groups. Spontaneous action

groups also form for the purpose of dealing with specific problems in the community and city. After the issue has been resolved, these groups usually dissolve.

The diversity in leadership was found to be necessary in order to utilize both direct-action resources and electoral resources. One group of leaders cannot effectively serve the community. Personal interaction is often more effective than acting through representatives. This does not mean that representation is not important. It has been shown that blacks are now in positions of real power in representative positions, both on the city and state levels. However, without the support of the black community, this representation would not be possible. The election of black representatives to public office has revealed a new independence among blacks in using their voting power to their best advantage rather than accepting what the white leadership and community has to offer.

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